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TELEGRAM

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E.O. 12865: N/A
TAGS: PEPR UR UR AF IR
SUBJECT: Q1 AFGHANISTAN: REACTION TO PRESIDENT'S
JANUARY 4 ADDRESS

REF: GOODBYE/MELTON TELCON

Q1 SUMMARY: PRESIDENT CARTER'S JANUARY 4 ANNOUNCEMENT
OF US MEASURES AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION WAS WIDELY
REPORTED IN LONDON WEEKEND PRESS AND PRELIMINARY EDITORIAL
REACTION IS FAVORABLE.

1. MOST PAPERS COMMENT ON THE BROAD ISSUES OF THE SOVIET
INTERVENTION AND THE WESTERN RESPONSE, BUT SEVERAL COMMENT
SPECIFICALLY ON THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT.

2. THE LONDON TIMES EDITORIAL OF JANUARY 5 SAID THE
PRESIDENT "IS RIGHT TO CURTAIL GRAIN SHIPMENTS TO THE
SOVIET UNION... NOBODY WILL STARVE... BUT IT WILL BE MUCH
MORE THAN A MINOR INCONVENIENCE, ESPECIALLY IF AUSTRALIA
AND CANADA JOIN IN." CURTAILMENT OF GRAIN SUPPLIES "IS
A SUITABLE MEASURE BECAUSE IT CAN BE APPLIED GRADUALLY
AND ABANDONED EASILY IF THE SITUATION CHANGES AND BECAUSE
IT DOES NOT INVOLVE A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO SOVIET SECURITY."
THE TIMES ACKNOWLEDGED THAT A SPIRAL OF ACTION AND COUNTER-
ACTION COULD LEAD TOWARDS A SERIOUS CONFRONTATION BUT
THAT "IS A RISK THAT MUST BE TAKEN FOR THE SAKE OF AVERT-
ING GREATER RISKS IN THE FUTURE." THE TIMES CONCLUDES
THE PRESIDENT "HAS TAKEN A COURAGEOUS DECISION AND HE
DESERVES THE SUPPORT OF HIS ALLIES."

3. SUNDAY TIMES CORRESPONDENT HENRY BRANDON REPORTS
JANUARY 5 THAT PRESIDENT CARTER "IS CONFRONTING RUSSIA
OVER AFGHANISTAN WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE... BUT ANYTHING
SHORT OF THE PACKAGE OF RETALIATORY MEASURES ANNOUNCED
ON FRIDAY WOULD HAVE COST HIM HIS CREDIBILITY... THERE IS
LITTLE DOUBT THAT BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD THERE WILL BE
STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS." BRANDON
NOTES THAT IRAN IS STILL OF DEEPER CONCERN TO THE US,
NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE HOSTAGES BUT BECAUSE OF THE
DANGER OF IRAN'S DISINTEGRATION AND THE LIVELIHOOD THIS
WOULD BENEFIT THE USSR. BRANDON SAYS, "CARTER SPOKE
WITH QUIET FIRMNESS BUT ALSO DEEP ANXIETY. THE IRAN
AND AFGHANISTAN CRISES HAVE FINALLY TRIGGERED A NEW
REALIZATION IN HIM THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THE WEST WILL
ULTIMATELY DEPEND ON WHO CONTROLS THIS REGION AND THAT
THE US HAD TO CONFRONT THE USSR TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE
IN HER LEADERSHIP AND TO BEGIN BUILDING A NEW CONVENTIONAL
BALANCE OF POWER IN THE REGION."

4. A SUNDAY TIMES EDITORIAL JANUARY 6 DOES NOT EXPLICITLY
COMMENT ON THE PRESIDENT'S JANUARY 4 STATEMENT BUT NOTES
ECONOMIC REPRISALS ARE THE WEAPONS MOST IMMEDIATELY

AVAILABLE TO THE WEST AND THAT "THE WEST HAD TO MAKE
AN INSTANT RESPONSE TO SHOW IT HAS NOT ENTIRELY LOST ITS
NERVE." THE SUNDAY TIMES SAYS THE WEST MUST NOW "DRAW
LINES THE KREMLIN WILL NOT DARE TO CROSS." THE WEST
SHOULD ALSO ORGANIZE A NEW "COLLABORATIVE LINKING OF
THE ENTIRE NON-SOVIET WORLD" TO INCLUDE A NEW INTER-
NATIONAL RESERVE CURRENCY AND A REEXAMINING OF THE WEST'S
RELATIONSHIP WITH OPEC COUNTRIES. THIS IS THE ONLY
"SENSIBLE RESPONSE" TO THE "CORE OF THE INSTABILITY"
SURFACING IN THE 1970s THAT IS THE SOURCE OF MOSCOW'S
FEARS AND AMBITIONS, AND OF THE MENACE TO THE NON-SOVIET
WORLD."

5. A SUNDAY OBSERVER EDITORIAL (JANUARY 6) LISTS THE
BLOCKING OF GRAIN AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS TO THE
SOVIET UNION AS THE "MOST SERIOUS" OF THE COUNTERMEASURES
ANNOUNCED BY THE PRESIDENT. IT NOTES THE PRESIDENT
"POLITICALLY MAY HAVE HAD LITTLE CHOICE ABOUT STOPPING
GRAIN EXPORTS AND THIS MIGHT HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT OF
MAKING THE SOVIET UNION THINK TWICE ABOUT SUCH ADVENTURES
IN THE FUTURE. IT IS, HOWEVER, A TWO-EDGED SWORD, FOR
THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST USE OF THE OIL WEAPON APPLY EQUALLY
TO GRAIN, EXCEPT THAT AN OIL EMBARGO OR CUTBACK WOULD BE
MORE IMMEDIATELY DAMAGING FOR THE WEST." THE OBSERVER
ASKS WHETHER THE AIM OF WESTERN POLICY IS TO PUNISH THE
SOVIETS OR HELP THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN AND OTHER THIRD
WORLD COUNTRIES "LOOKING FOR THE WAY TO A BETTER LIFE."
IF THE SECOND, THE OBSERVER RECOMMENDS WESTERN POLICY
"AVOID ANY PRECIPITATE ACTION WHICH WOULD PROLONG THE
STAY OF SOVIET FORCES FROM AFGHANISTAN." BREWSTER

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